

## **EVALUATION OF BUDGET REQUEST INDIAN EDUCATION FOR ALL - PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **JUSTIFICATION**

This proposal is necessary for the successful implementation of Indian Education For All (IEFA), which is a constitutional and statutory obligation for the Montana public education system. A "basic system of free quality public elementary and secondary schools," means that, at the minimum, an educational program must develop "curricula designed to integrate the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians into the curricula, with particular emphasis on Montana Indians." Mont. Code Ann. Sec. 20-9-309 (2)(c) (2005). However, teachers cannot teach what they do not know. According to the 2005 Annual Data Collection (ADC), which is information and data submitted by local districts and compiled by the Office of Public Instruction (OPI), 90 percent of Montana schools ranked their teachers' knowledge of Indian contemporary issues as low to medium; 85 percent of Montana schools ranked their teachers' knowledge of Indian history as low to medium; and the greatest need that Montana schools pointed to regarding implementing IEFA was professional development.

Although the state, in 1972, voted to include Article X, Section 1, subsection 2, in the Montana Constitution, which provides that the "state recognizes the distinct and unique cultural heritage of the American Indians and is committed in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural integrity," no funding was provided to implement this provision until the 2005 Legislative Session. In the 2007 biennium, both the OPI and local districts received funding to implement IEFA and integrate their curricula in all content areas for ALL students.

At the beginning of this implementation effort, there is a need for concentrated focus and effort for IEFA professional development. Current teachers went through Montana's K-12 education system learning scant little content about American Indians. They then completed their higher education and teacher education programs likely without any classes specifically devoted to American Indian content or classes integrated with American Indian content. With the implementation of IEFA, the education system is now asking teachers to teach about American Indians. In order to ensure proper and comprehensive IEFA implementation, including use of OPI created resources, teachers must first gain content knowledge about American Indian history and contemporary issues and gain confidence about including it in their classroom lessons. This confidence can only occur through a broad statewide effort to provide IEFA professional development content and opportunities.

Additionally, teachers must increase their knowledge about instructional practices, including culturally relevant curriculum, when teaching students who may be economically-different and culturally-different from themselves. This type of instructional knowledge is necessary to close the achievement gap that exists between American Indian and white students in the Montana K-12 public education system.

### **GOAL(S)**

It is the mission of the Office of Public Instruction to improve teaching and learning through communication, collaboration, advocacy, and accountability to those we serve.

The five agency-wide goals of the Office of Public Instruction are:

- Goal 1: Support schools so that all students can achieve high standards
- Goal 2: Assess and communicate the quality and achievements of K-12 education
- Goal 3: Provide access to and management of information and data related to K-12 school improvement
- Goal 4: Deliver quality instruction through professional development
- Goal 5: Support accountability and improvement in all Montana schools

This proposal supports two of the five agency-wide goals of the Office of Public Instruction. The two goals that are targeted with this proposal are:

- ✓ Support schools so that all students can achieve high standards
- ✓ Deliver quality instruction through professional development

Goal 4 objectives insist that the OPI continue their strong collaborative efforts with educators and other interested parties to develop job-imbedded, research-based, and sustained professional development. This proposal to provide IEFA professional development will certainly continue these efforts to include teachers and administrators in the field both in the development and implementation of the process. This proposal will also provide that professional development be delivered through on-site visits, workshops, conferences, publications and distance learning opportunities.

Goal 1 objectives contend that the OPI will provide targeted assistance and training for low performing an/or at-risk students and schools. This proposal will offer training to teachers in instructional practices for this category of schools, including classroom strategies to include culturally relevant curriculum tied to IEFA. OPI will assist in the development of partnerships to extend and enhance the resources of school districts. This proposal undoubtedly meets this objective. The OPI currently partners with many educational organizations in the state and will work with these partners to ensure proper delivery of this IEFA professional development content.

## **PERFORMANCE CRITERIA**

Progress to provide all teachers professional development regarding implementation of IEFA will be measured through multiple measures.

- The 2006 ADC will measure whether Montana's 430 school districts are providing professional development regarding IEFA to their staff and what general programs and activities local districts are implementing using their FY 2007 IEFA funding. **PERFORMANCE TARGET:** Each year there will be a 10 percent increase in the number of school districts offering IEFA professional development to their staff.
- Through the ADC, the OPI will measure whether school staffs are increasing their knowledge base about IEFA in order to implement IEFA at the local district level. In 2005, schools reported that, in the area of American Indian history, 11 percent of their teachers' had a low level of knowledge, 62 percent had a medium level of knowledge, and 15 percent had a high level of knowledge. **PERFORMANCE TARGET:** The number of schools reporting an increase in each of their stakeholders' knowledge will increase by an additional 5 percent from low to medium and medium to high each year.

- The IEFA professional development program will carry an evaluation component so the OPI can measure its effectiveness, both in delivery and content. The evaluation tool will request feedback from teachers about effectiveness of the professional development materials and activities and their relevance to the teachers' needs. **PERFORMANCE TARGET:** This evaluation process will be developed the first year of implementation.
- The ADC will provide crucial information about the regions in Montana that need the most assistance implementing IEFA. The 2005 ADC reflected that 40 percent of local districts indicated teacher training as their greatest need. **PERFORMANCE TARGET:** Within five years, the ADC will reveal a decrease of at least 20 percentage points of local districts indicating this need.
- The OPI will hire an outside evaluator to measure the effectiveness of its IEFA professional development program, determine gaps in its delivery, discover areas of improvement, and gauge successes.

## **MILESTONES**

By October 2006, the OPI will have collected another year of data from the ADC from which to gauge local districts' current efforts toward implementing IEFA, including offering professional development for their staff. This data will allow the OPI to offer targeted professional development to schools that are struggling to implement IEFA.

By August 2007, the OPI will develop and begin a comprehensive plan for carrying out professional development activities to implement IEFA across the state. This plan will include development of regional providers, a plan and curriculum for training of trainers, online professional development opportunities, creation of regional conferences and/or workshops, and dissemination of IEFA best practices to local districts and educational organizations.

By September 2007, the OPI will coordinate a kick-off of professional development activities in the then-developed IEFA Professional Development regions. This professional development will include a showcase of the OPI and partner developed materials and resources.

By October 2007, the OPI will disseminate training publications and manuals regarding IEFA implementation to local districts and educational organizations. These publications will include information concerning curriculum integration issues and necessary educator knowledge and content as well as resources for IEFA implementation.

For the 2007-08 school year, the OPI will offer an online professional development system that offers information on best practices to implement IEFA. This professional development will begin with a presentation to increase awareness of IEFA and associated best practices and will move on to include an online forum where cohorts of teachers can discuss best practices, research, and instructional practices. This online forum allows an on-going and sustainable approach at the state level where teachers can earn recertification units while developing an online support system. Continued efforts to offer awareness workshops and data presentations on school sites will also be a part of the IEFA Professional Development process.

By January 2008, a statewide report on IEFA implementation will be developed and disseminated. This report will outline local district efforts, successes, and best practices.

By February 2008, the OPI will develop a plan for a seamless Kindergarten to College process for implementing IEFA that includes K-12 professional development and coordinated efforts with the Montana University System teacher education programs.

## **FTE**

2.5 FTE are requested in this proposal. One FTE will be placed into the OPI's Indian Education Division to develop the IEFA professional development plans and processes and to carry out state efforts and to provide support to local districts. 1.5 FTE will be part-time employees placed in the field to provide support to local districts and carry out regional professional development activities.

Once this proposal is funded, the OPI will begin its recruitment and hiring process for these positions. The OPI will secure personnel in these positions by August 2007.

Similar to any position at the OPI, once a person becomes adept at the job, acquires specific skills that are highly sought after, and becomes established in the state's education system, they are exceedingly likely to be recruited by local school districts and other educational organizations. These other agencies often offer higher salaries, which sometimes prove difficult for OPI retention of employees.

## **FUNDING**

This proposal is for a general fund appropriation. No other funds are available to help implement this constitutional and statutory obligation.

Most of the OPI's most recent work focusing on IEFA professional development has been through the 2007 biennial appropriation to the OPI for IEFA. Much of the OPI's current efforts go toward developing IEFA resources and materials for educators to use in the classroom. Some professional development has been done, however, there is a need for FTE and operating funds to focus solely on IEFA professional development processes if IEFA implementation is to be successful and comprehensive. The size and rural nature of Montana requires state, regional, and local efforts at implementing IEFA. The OPI currently advocates and promotes collaborative efforts for professional development and the IEFA implementation initiative is included in most OPI professional development offerings as well as other educational organizations offerings. However, the uniqueness of the IEFA initiative as well as its newness requires focused innovative professional development activities and approaches, concentrated efforts with educational partners, tailored support for local district work, and comprehensive planning.

## **OBSTACLES**

Montana has a strong local control tradition whereby local school boards make professional development decisions for their individual districts. The OPI can develop and offer many IEFA professional development opportunities at the state level, but schools will determine for themselves whether they will allow staff the time and expense to attend. While the OPI can offer technical assistance and support for schools to

implement IEFA, it cannot compel schools to engage in any practice. Funding this proposal, however, allows the state to offer focused efforts and professional development opportunities to assist schools, both statewide and on-site, in their IEFA implementation efforts.

## **RISK**

In 2005, the Legislature appropriated funds to assist the OPI and local districts to implement Indian Education For All. This constitutional obligation to integrate curriculum with American Indian history and contemporary issues was largely omitted from classrooms for 33 years prior to this appropriation. The OPI and many local districts took this initiative seriously and began, in earnest, to integrate their curricula in all content areas. However, the high degree to which educators lacked knowledge of Indian content soon became apparent. Based on the OPI's experience with the first few months of implementation, educators sometimes do not know enough about Indian content to ask questions about their professional development needs. The OPI can provide volumes of materials and resources, but until educators understand such content, little implementation can occur at the classroom level. This knowledge can only be accessed via IEFA professional development.

The risk of not funding this proposal is a lack of IEFA implementation at the local district and classroom level. This implementation is required in order for school districts to offer a "quality education" as defined by the Legislature. In order to meet the spirit and intent of the Indian Education provision in the Montana Constitution – that content about Indian history and contemporary issues be included in every classroom for all students – there is a dire need for professional development to increase content knowledge of educators. The promise and hope that is provided by funding this proposal is that ALL Montana students will receive a quality education that includes IEFA.